

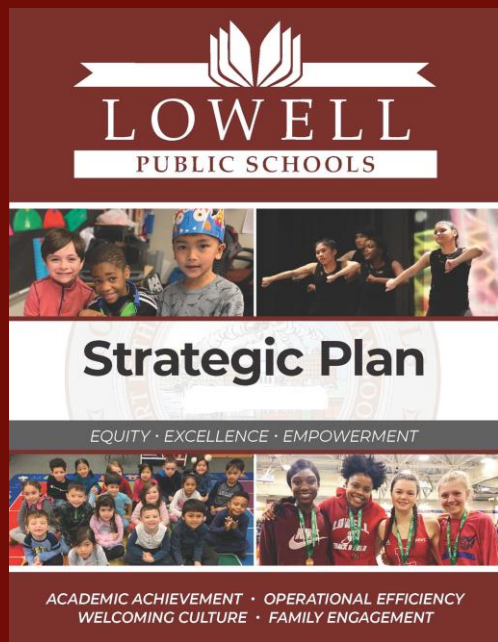
# Lowell Public Schools

# Budget Update & Adjustment

*Aligning our finances with our educational plan  
with every budget decision*

Presentation to the Finance Subcommittee  
February 22, 2021





## Our Core Beliefs

- **A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child we serve.**
- **Teaching and Learning are at the core of our work.** Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.
- **Parents are our partners.** They are our students' first teachers in the home.
- **There is no silver bullet to improving our schools.** Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- **Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students.** Putting every child on a path to college and career success is the responsibility of the entire community.



# Agenda

- Summary of Revenue Sources
- FY21 Budget to Actuals
- Limitations of Use of Savings
- Alignment of Our Finances with Our Educational Plan
- Strategic Goals and Additional FY21 Investment Opportunities
- Recommended Action





*Salaries \$5.2 million*  
*Transportation \$4.1 million*  
*Day to Day \$1 million*  
*Long Term Sub \$200k*

## Summary of Revenue Sources

Over the next few weeks, we will discuss three different revenue sources:

- 1) FY20/21 SAVINGS - adjust the original spending plan to align with our current needs/goals (approx \$10.5 million)
- 1) FY21/22 Chapter 70 - General Fund/Local Fund dollars (Increased \$10.3 million to \$177 million Chapter 70)
- 1) FY21-23 ESSER II Funds (\$17.8 million over two years)





*Our projections are made with all current known information in addition to assumptions based on prior and planned future spending. With the continued uncertainty of the current environment, these forecasted savings may change prior to the close of the fiscal year.*



# FY21 Budget to Actuals

As reported in the budget updates provided at prior School Committee meetings, our continued analysis of the previously adopted FY21 budget compared to actual expenditures shows anticipated surpluses in several key areas:

- Vacancy savings from unfilled positions and retirement savings is currently projected to result in a salary line surplus of \$5.2 million.
- Long Term Subs is projected to have a \$200k savings
- Day-to-Day Subs is projected to have a \$1 million savings
- The savings in transportation is estimated to be approximately \$4.1 million due to remote learning. This includes the assumption that we will have 66 buses in April, May and June.



# Limitations of Use

- We **cannot carry the funds forward** to next fiscal year
- We **can't prepay for salaries or services** for next year; prepayments can only be for supplies/texts
- **Window of time** to make decisions – We can't make decisions too soon due to needing accurate forecasting but still need to make decisions quick enough to act.
- There are limitations to how funds can be used while **remaining compliant with net school spending eligibility**. Facility costs over \$150k and equipment over \$5k are not considered eligible.

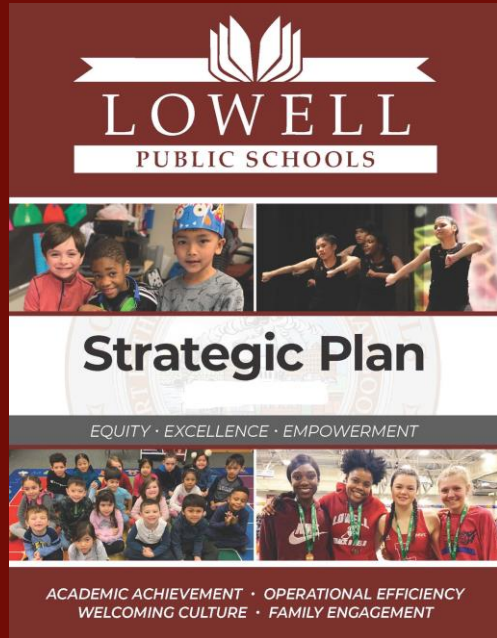


## Aligning the District's Financial Plan with the Education Plan

The recommended budget adjustment will enable the District to leverage the anticipated savings to immediately invest in additional and necessary supports for students, families and school communities in four critical areas:

- 1. Improving academics and student achievement at every school site**, including supplemental staffing and equipment to support the continued increase of in-person learning, and classroom technology that is aligned with the next phase of the District's digital learning plan;
- 2. Improving operational efficiency across the system**, including investments to proactively and responsibly offset the FY22 expense baseline to maintain the District's positive fiscal outlook moving forward;
- 3. Ensuring that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family**, including improvements to school buildings and grounds within the allowable parameters of net school spending;
- 4. Increasing community engagement and empowering families as partners in the educational process**, including software to support online school registration





# GOAL #1

**Improve academics and student achievement at every school site, including supplemental staffing and equipment to support the continued increase of in-person learning, and classroom technology that is aligned with the next phase of the District's digital learning plan**

**Recommended Adjustment:  
\$7,609,350**





## Investment Priority: Expanding In-Person Learning

The School Committee set the following target dates for returning students to in-person learning:

- **February 22 (per vote of SC on 1/25/21)** - Students in substantially separate special education programs who were previously participating in our in-person learning model
- **March 1** - Students, who are not in a substantially separate special education program, but were previously served in-person this school year as part of our original school reopening plan
- **April 1** - Expansion of our in-person learning model to include additional students beyond those who were assigned to in-person learning at the beginning of this school year.



LPS is committed to increasing in-person learning for all students in the safest and most responsible manner possible. We are committed to the safe operations of our school system that ensures, to the best of our ability, the health and safety of all 14,000+ students and 1800+ staff members.



## Resources Needed to Expand In-Person Learning Supplemental Staff

- 6 additional teachers- needed to support instruction where teacher is exempt from in-person teaching (MOA-23A)
- 15 additional paraprofessionals (*and fill current vacancies\*\**)
  - 15 projected short term leaves of absence (including maternity leaves) likely to be filled with paraprofessionals, if not filled with successful job postings, leaving their paraprofessional positions open
  - additional 1-2 paraprofessionals per school for:
    - individualized support for students;
    - provide built-in substitute pool;
    - further coverage for expected quarantining

**Total approximate cost: \$270,000**

***\*\*These positions are in addition to the following vacant school-based positions which will continue to be posted with ongoing recruitment:***  
*14 teachers, 41 paras, 1 GC, 1 School based Climate Specialist, 3 Coaches, 2 clerks*



*Per Diem rates are paid  
when working over 4 hours:*

*LSAA \$523/day*

*Teachers \$438/day*

*Paras \$175/day*

*Hourly rates are paid  
when working under 4  
hours:*

*LSAA \$32.50/hour*

*Teachers \$30/hour*

*Paras \$15/hour*



## Resources Needed to Expand In-Person Learning Training and Support for Instructional Staff

- 8 hours (at the per diem rate) of professional development prior to implementation of a hybrid model for all instructional staff (optional after school and weekend sessions) \$611,000
  - Districtwide training on new classroom hardware (classroom cameras and monitors)
  - Districtwide training on continued use of software to support the hybrid model (Seesaw, Google Classroom, iReady and benchmark assessments)
  - Flipped classroom models
  - Tiered intervention strategies
- 40 hours (at the contractual hourly rate) for classroom design/set-up, as well as pre-planning, lesson development and continued model refinement throughout the course of implementation for all instructional staff (additional planning and curriculum development beyond the contractual work day) \$1,876,600
  - Additional collaborative planning for simultaneous (in-person/remote) instruction and structured time for teacher-led, midcourse improvements to the hybrid model

**Total approximate cost: \$2,487,600**



Parents/Guardians of those students returning in-person are being asked to sign a consent form so their child can partake in the pool testing program.



## Resources Needed to Expand In-Person Learning

### COVID-19 Pool Testing

**Within a few weeks, we will have a more accurate estimate on how much it will cost to run Pool Testing until the end of the school year. Approximate costs are:**

- \$50 per pool test for 5-10 people within each pool (dependent of student population) (\$40,000 per week per 8000 students-or approximately \$480,000)
- \$250/month administrative fee x 3
- Program facilitator salary/nurse: \$25,000
- Couriers: \$5,000
- Follow-up testing: \$10,000
- Stipends for volunteer sample collectors: \$40,000

**Total approximate cost: \$560,750**



## Resources Needed to Expand In-Person Learning Indoor Air Quality

We have 1032 air purifiers plus 30 on the way from DESE

- Purifiers are on hand for each of the 974 standard classrooms in the District

Additional purifiers are recommended for other instructional spaces in schools

- An average gym would require 4 units
- Each library would require at least 2 units

200 additional air purifiers at \$300/unit would allow for expanded classroom space in libraries, gyms, and cafeterias

**Total approximate cost: \$60,000**



## Investment Priority: Digital Learning

Lowell Public Schools' last digital learning plan spanned 2015-2018. Increasing use of classroom technology was the focus; however, due to budgetary constraints, investments in technology were limited for FY17, FY18 and FY19.

In FY20, LPS increased the technology budget to support 1:1 student device distribution, providing over 14,650 Chromebooks, MacBook or iPads to students and 1500 hotspots to student and families.

Classroom hardware and staff device upgrades are now necessary to support continued digital literacy in the classroom. It is estimated that staff devices range between 6-10 years old





# Resources Needed for Digital Learning

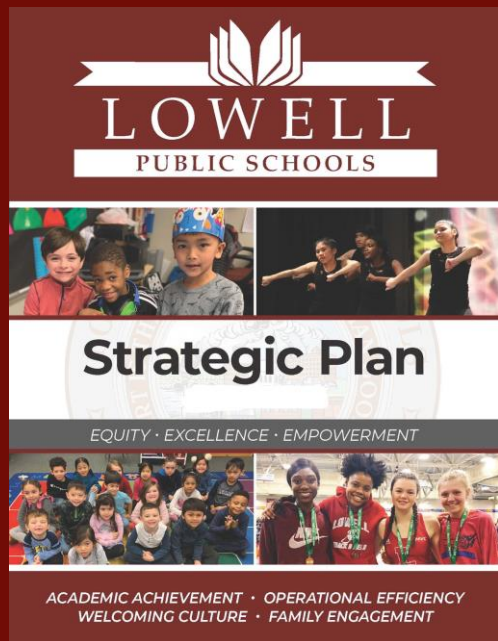
## Classroom hardware and staff device upgrades

- Classroom interactive displays for approximately 450 classrooms \$2,000,000
- Teacher/school based admin. device replacement \$1,732,000 (6 years)
- New student device distribution \$180,000
- Central Office clerical device replacement (6 years) \$110,000
- Clerical and custodian\* device replacement (6-8+ years) \$110,000
- Miscellaneous \$75,000
- IT device distribution \$24,000

**Total approximate cost: \$4,231,000**

**\*Custodians are required to communicate via email with various departments, and they must use the ticket system to report building issues. Some custodians are currently using 8+ year old desktops.**





## GOAL #2

**Improve operational efficiency across the system, *including investments to proactively and responsibly offset the FY22 expense baseline to maintain the District's positive fiscal outlook moving forward***

**Recommended Adjustment:  
\$1,227,317**



## Investment Priority: Maintain the District's Positive Fiscal Outlook Going Forward

- The use of FY21 savings to “prepay” allowable expenses in FY22 creates greater budget flexibility for next year
- However, using current year (FY21) non-recurring savings to offset next year’s (FY22) recurring expenses also creates the risk of a funding cliff for the following year (FY23)
- We used “prepayments” as one part of our overall budgeting strategy during last year’s economic downturn, but the risks were mitigated by the fact that SOA funds were expected in FY22
- There are two additional streams of recurring revenue which are unlikely to come to fruition in FY22, but could potentially be realized in FY23 which again limit the risks of strategic budget offsets this year within a defined parameter:
  1. Enrollment variability due to COVID-19
  2. Required increases in the City cash contribution





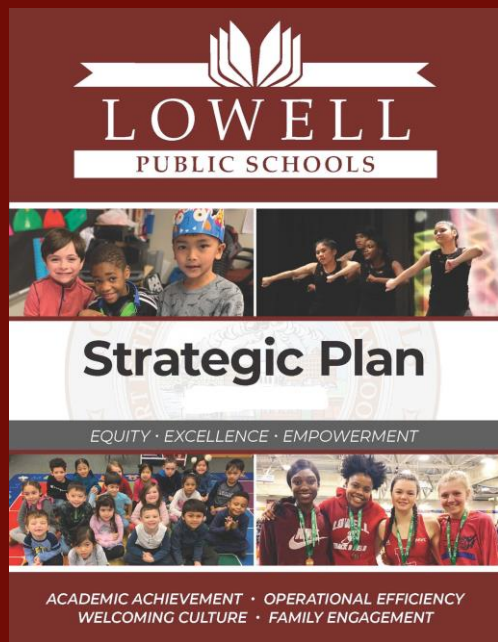
## Resources Recommended to Maintain the District's Positive Fiscal Outlook Going Forward

Investments to proactively and responsibly offset the FY22 expense baseline

- Possible "Suspense" carryover \$227,317
- Districtwide curriculum/supplies \$500,000
- Replenish revolving accounts \$500,000
- Grant Offsets delayed (carry forward grant funds) TBD

**Total approximate cost: \$1,227,317**





## GOAL #3

**Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, *including improvements to school buildings and grounds within the allowable parameters of net school spending***

**Recommended Adjustment:  
\$1,600,000**



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To: Chief Operating Officer  
 From: Director of Operations & Maintenance  
 Re: Capital Fund Request FY 21/22  
 Date: 02/11/2021

Capital Plan Funds Request - Fiscal Year 2021/2022

The Capital Plan Request for this upcoming fiscal year is based upon the findings of the EMG-Facilities Condition Assessment Report completed September 25, 2018. To address the deficiencies across the District, the report recommends an immediate 7.8-million-dollar average yearly expenditure for ten years to maintain our 30 school buildings. The EMG Report separates the needs into six categories. They are:

Safety:	An observed or reported unsafe condition that if left unaddressed could result in an injury; a system or component that presents a potential liability risk
Performance / Integrity:	Component or system has failed, is almost failing, performs unreliably, does not perform as intended, and/or poses a risk to overall system stability.
Accessibility:	Does not meet ADA, UFAS, and/or other handicap accessibility requirement.
Environmental:	Improvements to air or water quality, including removal of hazardous materials from the building or site.
Modernization / Adaptation:	Conditions, systems, or spaces that need to be upgraded in appearance or function to meet current standards, facility usage, or client/occupant needs. This plan type also includes, when deemed necessary, the removal of decommissioned assets. Modernization/Adaptation items are NOT included in the FCI calculation.
Lifecycle / Renewal:	Any component or system in which future repair or replacement is either anticipated beyond the next several years or is of minimal substantial early- term consequence.

## Investment Priority: Facilities Improvements

EMG Facilities Condition Assessment Report, published in 2018, recommends that \$7,800,000 be invested annually for ten years to maintain all 30 buildings in LPS

- The District maintains two accounts each year for facility projects:
  - Building Repair funds ( \$150,000) are used for things such as replacing carpet, tile floors, door hardware, Fence repairs, keys/locks, etc.
  - Capital Improvement funds (\$100,000) have been used in the past to install the new park at Moody School, new restroom floors at Sullivan, carpet replacement large scale at LHS last year
- Dozens of additional, required improvements/projects have been identified which are allowable under net school spending and can be initiated this spring and completed by the end of the summer





# Resources Needed for Facilities Improvements

The Director of Operations & Maintenance has fully analyzed the universe of needs and assessed all competing interests, as well as net school spending requirements

An additional review by the Facilities Subcommittee is recommended with an emphasis on Renaissance Schools, student impact, safety improvements, and projects that can be completed by the end of summer (with a ceiling of \$150,000 per project)

Recommendations on specific projects will be brought back to the School Committee for action following the Facilities Subcommittee

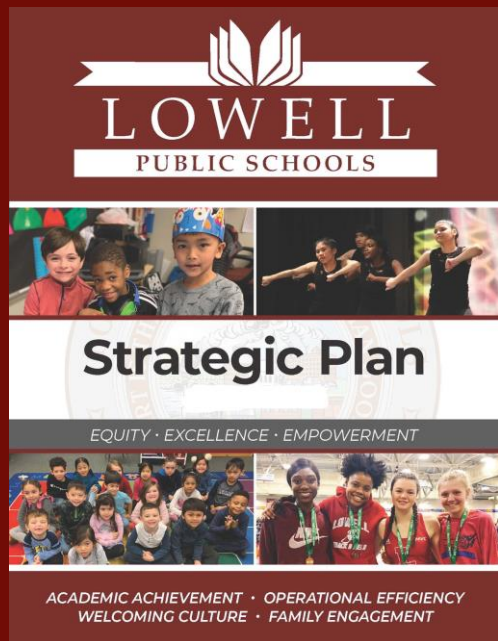
Capital Building & Program Project Index by School - Exhibit "A"

School	Renaissance School	High Student Impact	Safety	Project Type	Anticipated Cost	Subtotal By School
Bailey		★	⚠	Concrete Repair - Stairs and Walkways	17,900	
				Paint Metal Entrances	8,700	
						26,600
Bartlett	℞		⚠	Paving Side/Back Playground/Lot, walls and stairs	125,000	
	℞		⚠	Repair retaining wall and Stairs	5,500	
	℞	★		Paint /Refinish Gym walls, restripe and finish floor	30,000	

Capital HVAC Project Index by School - Exhibit "B"

School	Renaissance School	High Student Impact	Safety	Project Type	Subtotal By School
Bailey		★	⚠	HVAC Summary of Measures through 2021	721,507
Bartlett	℞	★	⚠	HVAC Summary of Measures through 2021	842,775
Butler	℞	★	⚠	HVAC Summary of Measures through 2021	719,255

**Total approximate cost: \$1,600,000**



## GOAL #4

**Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process, *including software to support online school registration***

**Recommended Adjustment: \$63,333**





# Investment Priority: Online Student Registration

In response to the 2020 pandemic, the Family Resource Center implemented online registration for the 2020-21 school year. This online system was internally built utilizing Google Forms and provided the district with the opportunity to understand the strengths and challenges of conducting an online registration process.

## **Strengths of Current System**

- Online registration affords families the opportunity to begin the registration process at home using either a computer or mobile phone.

## **Limitations of Current System**

- Parents have to send registration documents via email rather than as an attachment to the online application.
- Registration clerks have to retype the information from the registration form for each student into the formal Aspen student information system, increasing potential for errors.
- Parents are unable to revisit their submissions and update contact information and accompanying documents, as the current system does not have a “parent portal” component.
- Reporting views cannot be accessed by other departments that are critical to registration such as nurses, language testers, Special Education, etc.



# Resources Needed for Online Student Registration

## Aspen OLR Platform

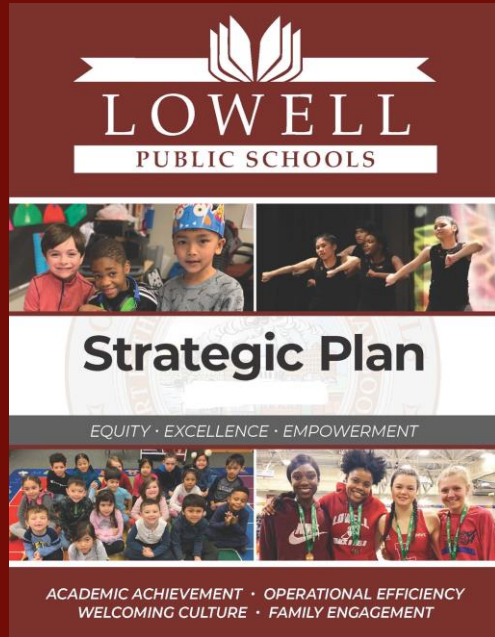
### Vetting Process

- A cross-departmental team (Webmaster, Data Office, Family Resource Center) reviewed existing registration platforms.
- Registration platform vendors whose platform could integrate with the district's Student Information System (SIS) were invited to present their platform to the team.

### Recommendation

- After reviewing three vendors' presentations and quotes for implementation and maintenance costs, the team selected the Aspen OLR (Online Registration System) as the most cost efficient and best data aligned system for LPS.
- Follett School Solutions is on the state-approved provider list and is currently the provider of the district's Student Information System (SIS). Their subsidiary - X2 Development Corporation - is a provider of the Aspen OLR platform.

**Total approximate cost: \$63,333**



## Recommended Action

Following review by the Finance Subcommittee, it is recommended that the Subcommittee forward the adjustments to the full Committee for action at the March 3, 2021, meeting to initiate the financial processes needed to translate the forecasted budget surplus into resources that support students, families and school communities.